

Golden 941

Chapter 941 A Fight to the Death

"Liu Minghui?!"

Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment upon hearing this. He hadn't expected that after several months, "Brother Hui" was still haunting him. It seemed this wasn't a coincidence; the other party must have been watching him for a long time.

"Brother Zhuang, what should we do? Shoot down their ship?"

Zhuang Rui remained silent in deep thought, but Peng Fei on the deck was having a much harder time. The enemy's squad machine guns were keeping them pinned down, and they didn't dare to raise their heads at all.

Moreover, the ship's several high-powered lights were also shattered by machine gun fire. This was the time of day when the fog was thickest, and it was impossible to see the situation on the other ship with the naked eye. The result of firing a few shots randomly was that the other ship was suppressed by machine gun fire.

"Shura, what the hell are you doing? Just blow that ship up..."

Peng Fei lay on the deck feeling a bit frustrated. Although he changed positions several times, trying to take out the enemy's machine gunner, firstly, it was dark and foggy, and secondly, there was a shield in front of the machine gun, so even if he hit it there, he couldn't hurt the person behind the gun.

Shura was also getting anxious. Pointing to a bright spot on the monitor, he said to Zhuang Rui, "Brother Zhuang, they're trying to escape. Their ships have started moving. What should we do? Give us an answer..."

Given the firepower of his ship, Li Zhen would feel ashamed if such a frigate escaped. Although the torpedo was expensive, having such a quasi-warship accompany it was worth it.

Upon hearing Li Zhen's words, Zhuang Rui's expression changed, and he said, "Shoot him down! We can't let him get away..."

If you don't nip it in the bud, it will eventually become a major problem. Zhuang Rui didn't pay attention when he won money last time, and he didn't expect Liu Minghui to be waiting for him here. If he lets the tiger return to the mountain again, it might shoot him in the back next time.

Even if Zhuang Rui has bodyguards, his family doesn't. When Zhuang's mother lives in the courtyard house, she goes out to buy groceries and does other things like a normal old lady. If she's kidnapped by these people, Zhuang Rui won't have anywhere to turn. 😊🐱 @95HUx.COM \$🚀

After returning from Africa, Zhuang Rui understood a principle: to live a comfortable life in this world, one cannot be soft-hearted; eliminating enemies physically is the best way.

"Alright, Brother Zhuang, just you wait and see, the fireworks are about to start..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's command, Li Zhen became extremely excited and began rapidly typing the password on the keyboard.

Zhuang Rui, who was standing nearby, saw the scene at the bottom of the hull on the screen. The torpedo, which was more than a meter long, was lying flat on a launcher. As Li Zhen moved, the launcher slowly began to move.

At the same time, one wall in the room rose up, revealing a two-meter square opening. From the screen, it was clear that outside the opening was the undulating sea.

"Target, frigate 200 meters ahead, locked on, speed 30 knots, fire!"

Li Zhen muttered technical terms that Zhuang Rui couldn't understand, typed a long string of numbers on the keyboard in front of the screen, and then slammed his right hand on the Enter key.

The launch pad on the screen seemed to move slightly, and a wisp of blue smoke appeared. The torpedo, which was more than a meter long, was launched, but it did not travel far in the air, only five or six meters, before plunging into the sea.

"This...this thing won't turn around and come at us, will it?"

Zhuang Rui saw the torpedo flying at a distance as close as water to his cruise ship, and couldn't help but feel a little worried. This thing was launching so slowly, it didn't seem to have any rocket boosters.

"Damn it, did Peng Fei buy a fake?"

Zhuang Rui immediately connected this to his profession. This foreigner selling weapons might be selling inferior goods, perhaps even adding less food additives to the fish.

"Brother Zhuang, do you really think this thing is a rocket? That it'll just whoosh and fly away?"

Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Zhen was both amused and exasperated. Torpedoes weren't cannonballs; they couldn't hit targets directly in the air. If that were the case, they might as well bring out those two cannons, though that would be far too noisy.

In the time it took to speak, more than ten seconds had passed. Zhuang Rui saw the torpedo dot on the screen, still more than a hundred meters away from the enemy ship, and couldn't help but say, "It shouldn't be this slow, right?"

"Alright, Brother Zhuang, just you wait and see. If it misses, I'll just grab a bomb and swim over there myself and blow that boat up..."

Li Zhen was completely defeated by Zhuang Rui's lack of expertise, so he simply stopped talking and stared intently at the trajectory of the torpedo.

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While the machine gunners on the command ship were providing suppressive fire, Hui Ge's escort ship had already started up and was slowly heading in the opposite direction from the cruise ship.

The frigate's maximum speed is thirty knots per hour, but it has just started up and hasn't picked up speed yet, so it doesn't seem to have created any distance between itself and the mountain of cruise ships in front of it.

When the third brother saw Hui order a retreat, he rushed forward and grabbed Liu Minghui, pleading with tears streaming down his face, "Big brother, you can't leave Lao Wu behind! He's been your brother for almost twenty years..."

When the third brother was making white paper fans, he was once scammed in Indonesia. He was exposed and detained. One of the scammers had a relative who was a general in power in Indonesia. The scammer said he would take the third brother to be shot at.

In Malaysia and Indonesia, the military wields immense power and can execute people without trial. The third brother had already resigned himself to his fate when, one night, Huo Jiang single-handedly stormed into the businessman's rubber plantation and rescued him.

So when Ming Huo was facing imminent death, the third brother was quite righteous and begged Liu Minghui to rescue him.

"Save them? How can we save them?"

Hui Ge looked helpless and said, "Are we just going to rescue them with only four or five of us?"

After removing the twelve people who went to attack the cruise ship, there were only four or five people left on the ship. Apart from the helmsman, only the machine gunner could be considered a combatant. As for Liu Minghui and Lao San, although they were not exactly helpless, they were not much better off.

All twelve people were taken down in the blink of an eye. Brother Hui was heartbroken. Five or six of his old brothers were among them, not to mention Fire General, who had always been the organization's number one fighter.

"Speed up, get out of here..."

Hui kicked the third brother, who was blocking his way, onto the deck. He roared into the cockpit, his face contorted with rage. His fists were clenched so tightly that his nails dug into his palms, and bright red blood flowed from between his fingers.

There's an old Chinese saying: "Where there's life, there's hope." As long as you're alive and have money, you can quickly gather a gang of outlaws.

Hui was already planning whether to unite the pirate gangs in the Strait of Malacca to deal with Zhuang Rui. He didn't care about money anymore; what he wanted most was Zhuang Rui's life.

Suddenly, the retired Malaysian Navy soldier in the cockpit stammered, "B-Brother, yeah... the enemy ship launched torpedoes..."

Although the ship's heavy weapons and naval guns had been removed, a set of early warning information equipment was retained. As soon as the torpedoes on the cruise ship were launched, the alarms on the frigate went off frantically.

"Wh...what? A torpedo?!"

When Hui heard what that person said, he was dumbfounded. He never dreamed that Zhuang Rui would equip a merchant ship with torpedoes.

Such a thing is as unbelievable as a missile being attached to a civilian airliner.

"Speed up, speed up!"

Hui knew that if his small frigate, only a few dozen meters long, were hit by a torpedo, it would surely catch fire, explode, and sink. He panicked and shouted at the driver to speed up while running towards the back of the ship.

"Big brother, wait, wait for me..."

The third brother knew there was another speedboat behind the boat, which was probably their only hope of escaping. He followed closely behind Hui Ge and staggered over to it.

As for the fate of Huo Jiang, the third brother had long forgotten about it. As the saying goes, "It's better to die for a friend than for yourself."

The boat was only so big, and everyone could hear the alarm. Not only Hui Ge and Lao San were thinking about the speedboat, but even the machine gunners stopped and ran back for their lives.

"Quick, start the engine!"

With the combined efforts of several people, the speedboat was launched into the sea. Hui kept urging it on, and thankfully, the frustrating situation of the engine failing to start did not occur. With the roar of the engine, the speedboat shot out like an arrow.

Just over a minute after the speedboat had sailed away from the frigate, a muffled sound came from behind the speedboat, followed by a burst of fire. The fog on the sea surface within a radius of several hundred meters was instantly dispersed by the shock wave caused by the explosion.

Whether it was Hui Ge on the speedboat or Peng Fei and the others on the cruise ship, they could clearly see that the frigate, which was about thirty meters long, was disintegrating at the front and rear amidst continuous explosions.

Thanks to Li Zhen's excellent maneuvering, the torpedo struck the frigate from the side. Although it was only a miniature torpedo a little over a meter long, it was more than enough to take down such an old-fashioned frigate.

The towering flames and flying debris sent chills down the spines of everyone on the speedboat. The third brother was truly terrified and stammered, "B-Big Brother, if we can escape this time, should we... should we go to Africa?"

"Bullshit! I, Liu Minghui, have survived a great calamity and am sure to have good fortune in the future. You brat surnamed Zhuang, I'll fight you to the death!"

Hui slapped the third brother down onto the speedboat, put his hands on his hips, and shouted curses at the cruise ship. He was actually trying to dispel his fear.

Chapter 942 A Bizarre Death

Hui was in high spirits. He knew there was a small island not far from here, and he had made some preparations on that deserted island. If he could escape there, he would have escaped death this time.

The Chinese say that those who survive a great calamity are destined for good fortune. Hui Ge firmly believes that as long as he survives this ordeal, he will be able to turn the tables and make up for it. Even if the enemy has torpedoes, they won't be able to withstand the siege of several pirate groups.

"Li Zhen, this torpedo is just too...unbelievable! Not only is it slow, but Liu Minghui still managed to get away with it?"

Zhuang Rui stared at the large screen in front of him, speechless. Was this the weapon he had bought for over ten million US dollars? Although the fireworks produced by the torpedo hitting the frigate were spectacular, they had allowed the culprit to escape.

The sky was beginning to brighten, the fog at sea had dissipated considerably, and the frigate was exploding from time to time, the towering flames illuminating the surrounding sea in a crimson glow. Zhuang Rui could naturally see that Hui Ge and the others had boarded the speedboat.

Although Zhuang Rui couldn't hear what Liu Minghui was saying, his maniacal laughter was enlarged and displayed on the screen, which annoyed Zhuang Rui.

"Brother Zhuang, their ship isn't just sitting there for us to shoot down. Don't worry, I'll personally take a helicopter to chase them. Those bastards won't get away..."

Li Zhen felt embarrassed by Zhuang Rui's words and began to resent Hui Ge and the others. In addition, he had been in the monitoring room all day, remotely directing operations, and his hands were itching to do the same.

No matter how fast the speedboat went, it couldn't match the speed of a helicopter. So when Li Zhen discovered that Brother Hui and the others had escaped, he wasn't worried at all. In his view, catching Liu Minghui was a piece of cake.

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"Haha, you brat surnamed Zhuang, if I, Liu Minghui, survive this time, I'll make sure you suffer..."

Hui-ge was still standing on the speedboat, expressing his emotions, which was understandable; after all, he had survived a near-death experience, so he was bound to be moved. However, Hui-ge didn't forget to instruct the speedboat driver to increase the speed. 68kj.

Although Hui believed that the other side would not use another torpedo against his speedboat, if Zhuang Rui's men caught up with him, he would definitely die at sea today.

"boom!"

Another loud bang, as if the frigate's propulsion system had been detonated. The entire ship disintegrated like scraps of paper, and the several-ton naval guns were thrown high into the air by the shockwave from the explosion, as if they were made of paper.

Countless wood chips and sheet metal debris flew everywhere, and engine oil leaked and burned in the sea, creating a real sea of fire within a radius of hundreds of meters. The sight was truly spectacular and rarely seen.

"Damn it, my boat..."

To Zhuang Rui and the others, the scenery was as beautiful as fireworks, but to Hui Ge, it wasn't so wonderful.

Looking back at the frigate he had bought for over ten million US dollars, Hui's heart was bleeding. Although it was a second-hand ship that someone else had discarded, it had made great contributions to him during this period.

More importantly, without this ship, Hui Ge's pirate plans would be difficult to continue. Standing on the ship, Hui Ge, who was somewhat sobered by the sea breeze, was now seriously considering Lao San's words.

With the tens of millions of dollars he got from the previous cruise ship robbery, Brother Hui now has over a hundred million dollars. He can take these brothers to his Caribbean island and live a life of ease.

Just as Hui-ge lowered his head in deep thought, a loud bang came from the frigate, the entire cabin flew into the air, the hull broke in two and slowly sank into the sea.

However, no one noticed that in the flames of the explosion, a specially made mast, seven or eight meters long and as thick as a child's arm, pierced the night sky and shot like an arrow toward the speedboat.

"Big...Big Brother!"

Hui, who was deep in thought, suddenly heard Lao San's voice beside him. He looked up in confusion and saw a dark figure descending from the sky as fast as lightning.

Before Hui could react, he felt a numbness in his chest as a thick mast pierced through him, pinning him tightly to the speedboat.

"Damn, why does it smell like barbecue?"

Looking at the scorching hot mast on his chest, which was scorching his skin and emitting wisps of smoke, Hui Ge had this very pointless question in his mind before he lost consciousness forever.

"Big brother..."

The third brother let out a wail beside him. He never expected that Hui Ge, who was so wise, brave, and dashing at the bow of the ship, would lose his life so inexplicably.

Although his face was full of sadness and he rushed towards Liu Minghui, the third brother's hand went down to touch a necklace around Hui's neck.

"It's still here, and it's not damaged..."

The third brother's hand touched a hard object about the size of a thumb, and a look of joy appeared on his face. With a sharp tug of his right hand, he pulled a small USB flash drive off Hui Ge's still-standing body and put it into his pocket.

"Die! If you die, all this money will be mine. Damn it, you think you're so tough, driving that speedboat so fast and standing so straight? Who else would die if not you?"

The third brother felt the USB drive in his pocket through his clothes, overjoyed. All the information about the organization's wealth, including bank account passwords, was stored on this USB drive, which Brother Hui always kept close to his body.

The person Hui Ge admires most in his life is the founding leader of China. He often quotes the leader's words, such as "A bad pen is worse than a good memory," which Hui Ge deeply agrees with.

Back when he was in his old profession, Hui would keep all the income coming in and hide the ledger in a very secret place, so that even Lao San didn't know about it.

After entering the new century, Hui Ge also kept up with the times and started using a laptop. He recorded all his accounts on a USB drive he carried with him, a habit he maintained until he became a pirate.

What the third brother just got his hands on was all the organization's account details and bank account passwords.

"Third...Third Brother, no...something's wrong..."

The third brother, who was basking in the glory of being a billionaire, was suddenly awakened by a voice next to him: Brother Hui was dead, and the third brother naturally inherited the position of the leader.

"What's wrong with that? Let's get out of here quickly. As long as we escape, I guarantee we brothers will live a life of luxury for the rest of our lives..."

The third brother was very dissatisfied. "I've finally gotten rid of this huge mountain on my head, and he says it's not good? Damn it, I'll give this kid a smaller share of the spoils from now on."

"Third...Third Brother..."

"Call me Big Brother. Don't worry, even without Brother Hui, we brothers will only get better off..."

The third brother found the word "three" particularly grating and had to correct his subordinate's way of addressing him.

"Damn it, what's with the big brother? We're all doomed, the motor's broken..."

The henchman couldn't stand Lao San's tone any longer. He grabbed Lao San by the collar and dragged him to the bow of the boat. Lao San was dumbfounded when he saw him.

It turns out that the seven or eight-meter-long mast not only pierced through Hui Ge's body, but also killed the helmsman at the bow, who was now dead beyond any doubt.

What sent a chill down the spine of the third brother was that the speedboat's engine was also emitting smoke, and the pleasant "putt-putt" sound could no longer be heard.

Even though the third brother was usually very calm and had many clever ideas, he was helpless in this situation. He pushed the person pulling him and shouted repeatedly, "Fix... hurry, fix it quickly..."

"What's the point of fixing it? It's already like this, how can it be fixed?"

The henchman kicked the third brother aside, grabbed a paddle, and started rowing frantically. He knew that if he was caught, he would die, and his only hope was that they wouldn't be discovered so he could escape in the chaos.

"Brother, may your spirit in heaven protect me so I can escape..."

The third brother, seeing this, was overjoyed, disregarding his decades-long friendship with Brother Hui. After muttering a few words, he exerted force and pushed Brother Hui and the other corpse into the sea.

There were three people left on the speedboat, each with an oar, paddling frantically. The giant ship in the distance, shrouded in the morning light, looked like a deadly demon. All they wanted was to get away from here as soon as possible.

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"Damn it, this...this actually works?"

Zhuang Rui, who was in the monitoring room, was stunned as he watched the scene magnified on the screen. He never expected that Liu Minghui would die like this.

The feud between the two stemmed from the fourth brother. This time, Liu Minghui was clearly here to take revenge on him. Zhuang Rui never intended to let Brother Hui go. Even if he captured Brother Hui, Zhuang Rui would have allowed him to disappear from the face of the earth. However, the way Brother Hui died was something Zhuang Rui could never have imagined.

After standing there stunned for a moment, Zhuang Rui saw on another monitor that Li Zhen was already piloting the helicopter and preparing to take off. He quickly grabbed the walkie-talkie and shouted, "Li Zhen, Li Zhen, Liu Minghui is dead. There are three people left on the speedboat. Bring those three back..."

"What? Damn it, that kid's lucky, otherwise I'd have made him die a week ago..."

Li Zhen had already left the monitoring room and missed this exciting scene. On the ship, it was difficult to see clearly with the naked eye. Apart from Zhuang Rui, Peng Fei and the others were also unaware of what had just happened.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Zhen cursed angrily and took off in the helicopter. He piloted the helicopter while Peng Fei, holding a sniper rifle, used the binoculars on the rifle to search for the speedboat.

"Da da, da da da..."

Seeing the helicopter approaching, the three people on the speedboat showed expressions of despair, and one of them even picked up a submachine gun and started firing at the helicopter.

"Damn it, they're courting death..."

Peng Fei pointed his gun downwards, and with a "bang," a bloody hole appeared between the eyebrows of the man below.

Chapter 943 Aftermath (Part 1)

"We surrender! We surrender!"

As the saying goes, a wise man doesn't fight a losing battle. The third brother, who had just become the boss and had only one henchman under him, nearly collapsed after seeing blood gushing from the forehead of the person in front of him. He was terrified that he would be next.

The third brother had seen fire-wielding men before, so he quickly threw away the oar in his right hand, put his hands behind his head, and squatted down on the speedboat that was gently bobbing with the waves.

Seeing his companion's appearance and the third pirate's actions, the other pirate obediently squatted down. The long gun barrel and dark muzzle of the helicopter were pointed directly at his forehead.

Seeing the cowardly behavior of the remaining two pilots, Li Zhen, who was piloting the helicopter, was slightly annoyed and muttered under his breath, "Damn, is that all?"

"How about I call out their names and send them away..."

Peng Fei tightened his grip on the sniper rifle resting on his shoulder. There were still six prisoners on the ship who hadn't died yet; it seemed that having two more or fewer wouldn't make a difference.

"No, let's hear what Brother Zhuang has to say..."

Li Zhen's relationship with Zhuang Rui was still rather distant, and given that he hadn't done his job very well today, he didn't want Zhuang Rui to think that he lacked discipline and was someone who liked to act on his own initiative.

"Brother Zhuang, what should we do with these two?"

Peng Fei tilted his head and spoke into the headset microphone. He knew that Zhuang Rui could see what was happening here from the monitoring room, and the helicopter itself was also equipped with a monitor that could transmit the images.

"Bring him back and ask him what happened..."

Zhuang Rui replied quickly, but he had another question left unsaid: "This torpedo cost me over a million dollars, so someone has to reimburse me, right?"

"I understand, I understand..."

Peng Fei agreed, then threw a rope ladder down from the helicopter, grabbed a megaphone, and shouted down, "You two, drop your weapons and climb up the rope ladder..."

Three or four minutes later, the helicopter, which had been hovering about ten meters above the sea, lifted off, leaving two terrified people hanging below, and flew towards the cruise ship.

"One group is responsible for guarding the prisoners, and the second group will impose martial law, prohibiting everyone from entering the deck..."

The pirate attack was now mostly resolved, and Peng Fei began making arrangements methodically. The bloodstains and bullet holes on the deck couldn't be seen by the honest platform staff.

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"Zhuang Rui, are you alright? What happened?"

Zhuang Rui had just stepped out of the monitoring room when, as he passed Huangfu Yun's door, the guy suddenly pulled open the door and grabbed Zhuang Rui.

The series of explosions had already woken up many people on the ship, although a few drunkards were still fast asleep.

From the balcony of the fifth-floor guest room, you can see exactly what's happening on the sea. Huangfu Yun, who had been hiding behind the curtains, watched a real-life gunfight movie and is now incredibly excited.

"Hey, can you let me go first? It's all over now. A bunch of pirates tried to hijack our ship, but Peng Fei and the others fought them off. I don't know the specifics, I'll go down and ask later..."

Zhuang Rui was busy going back to his room to see his wife and children, and he also had things to deal with down there. He didn't have time to waste with Huangfu Yun.

"I'll go too. I think there are still a few prisoners on deck?"

Hearing that the matter was over, Huangfu Yun's courage grew. Over the years, he had often heard news about Somalia and the Malacca pirates. Now that he could see these legendary figures up close, Huangfu Yun was very curious.

"Come on, there are some situations you're better off not attending. Stay home and keep Yunman company..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head. He had no intention of keeping these captured pirates alive. He knew that if you didn't kill a snake, it would bite you back. Zhuang Rui now had children and didn't want to leave any potential threats.

"Zhuang Rui, you..."

Huangfu Yun was an extremely shrewd man. Hearing Zhuang Rui's words and seeing the sinister look on his face, he immediately understood Zhuang Rui's intentions and couldn't help but gasp.

Whether in China or the United States, society is still regulated by law. Huangfu Yun is considered to be from the upper class. Although he has seen a lot of the dark side, he has not seen much about the dead.

"Alright, Brother Huangfu, let Yunman come out and chat with Xuanbing in my room. Don't go down to the fifth floor. I'll let you know when I've resolved this matter..."

Zhuang Rui patted Huangfu Yun on the shoulder. Having experienced life and death, he was much less concerned about the lives of others. If Zhuang Rui hadn't spent those two months on the deserted island, he probably wouldn't have had the intention to kill.

"Then you... be careful..." Huangfu Yun didn't say much, and turned back to his room to call Yun Man.

Huangfu Yun, being a law student, naturally knew that in cases of murder on the high seas, only the country to which the ship belongs had the right to adjudicate. This ship belonged to Panama, and since the pirates had no aggrieved parties, no one would go to Panama to sue Zhuang Rui after their deaths.

Therefore, from a legal perspective, even if Zhuang Rui personally killed those pirates, he would not bear any legal responsibility.

"Honey, are you alright?"

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui enter with Huangfu Yun and his wife, Qin Xuanbing disregarded the presence of outsiders and rushed to Zhuang Rui's side, scrutinizing him from head to toe, as if afraid that Zhuang Rui had been harmed.

"I told you it was nothing. You guys are watching TV here, and I'm watching an action movie in the monitoring room too..." Zhuang Rui smiled and casually picked up the remote to turn the TV volume down a bit.

"Daddy's bad, watch...watch TV..."

Zhuang Rui hadn't expected that his actions would anger his two children, who were engrossed in watching the show. The little ones frowned at Zhuang Rui with displeasure.

"Alright, you two can continue reading..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and handed the remote control to Qin Xuanbing, saying, "Call Zhang Qian over later too. She doesn't need to go out; I'll call you later..."

Peng Fei had already told Zhang Qian not to go out, but Zhuang Rui was worried that Zhang Qian would be scared if she stayed in the room alone, so he specifically told Qin Xuanbing to do the same.

"Why...are you still going out?"

When Qin Xuanbing saw Zhuang Rui open the door to leave, she couldn't help but feel nervous again.

"Hey, I already said everything's fine. All the pirates have been caught, so as the ship's owner, it's my job to take care of things..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and pushed his wife back into the room. Looking up, he saw that Jin Gang was standing sneakily by the door.

"Come on, stop pretending to be pitiful, you'd better behave in a bit..."

Zhuang Rui glared at Jin Gang with annoyance, but then an idea flashed through his mind: this time, he would let Jin Gang come along.

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"Boss, Zhuang, darling, what happened? I, the captain, am under house arrest! Your security guards won't let me out..."

Zhuang Rui had just gone down to the first floor when he received a call from Clyde. It seemed that this guy had been pushed to the limit, even calling out "darling" in a desperate way. Zhuang Rui was horrified, and the hairs on his body stood on end.

Although Clyde had drunk quite a bit yesterday, as a captain who had been tested by alcohol, he was still awakened by the gunshots and explosions this morning. Of course, by the time he woke up, the matter had already come to an end.

Having spent decades at sea, Clyde had also encountered pirates before, so his first thought was that he had run into pirates. Generally speaking, pirates would not harm people; they were only after money, not lives.

Clyde was a responsible man, and he immediately wanted to go out and negotiate with the pirates as the captain. However, he did not expect that the entire third floor had been sealed off by Zhuang Rui's men, so he hurriedly dialed Zhuang Rui's cell phone.

"Clyde, something unpleasant happened. We were attacked by pirates, but thanks to the valiant efforts of our security personnel, the situation has been brought under control..."

They are currently searching the ship for any remaining survivors, so you and all the crew members must stay in your rooms and not come out..."

Zhuang Rui spoke in a completely commanding tone, leaving no room for negotiation, because he couldn't let Clyde see that there were still survivors, otherwise it would be a very troublesome matter in the future.

Clyde paused for a moment after hearing Zhuang Rui's words, but then shouted, "Oh, Zhuang, you can't do this! I'm the captain, I'm entitled to know the whole story, I have to get down here..."

After thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui said, "Alright, Mr. Clyde, I have something to tell you. Your first mate, Mr. Jack, has been confirmed to have dealings with pirates, and this pirate attack was caused by your first mate..."

I now suspect there are other pirates on board, including you, Clyde. Everyone is a suspect, so no one except security personnel is allowed to leave their room. Now... do you understand?

The report on this incident still needs to be written by Clyde, so Zhuang Rui used Jack's excuse to keep Clyde in the room. Otherwise, given Clyde's status as captain, he would indeed be qualified to participate in the incident.

"Jack?"

Clyde was stunned by this, then said, "Boss, are you mistaken? Jack may like to drink and gamble, but he's still a responsible sailor..."

"Clyde, you might be right. He may be a competent sailor, but he's also a greedy fellow. Don't worry, you'll see Jack after we've searched the ship..."

After Zhuang Rui finished speaking, he didn't listen to Clyde's explanation to Jack anymore. He hung up the phone and hurriedly walked to a room on the first floor.

There were too few security personnel on the ship. Although several residential floors were sealed off, it was inevitable that they would become suspicious over time. Therefore, Zhuang Rui had to find out the truth about the incident as soon as possible and deal with those guys.

Of course, the loss of that torpedo shell still needs to be claimed, and the repair of those bullet holes on the deck and hull will also cost money.

Chapter 944 Aftermath (Part Two)

A light mist still lingered over the sea in the early morning, but the night sky was already a pale blue. In what seemed like an instant, a red glow appeared where the sky met the sea, and the glow slowly expanded, growing brighter and brighter.

A tiny, fiery red dot appeared where the sea met the sky. The sun seemed to be carrying a heavy burden, slowly and laboriously rising step by step. Finally, it broke through the clouds and jumped completely out of the sea, its color a lovely red.

In an instant, this deep red, round object suddenly emitted a dazzling light, so bright it hurt the eyes, and the clouds beside it also suddenly gained brilliance.

This wasn't the first time Zhuang Rui had witnessed such a sight, but every time he saw the sunrise over the sea, he was still completely captivated. The sun's tenacious vitality and unstoppable power would leave everyone feeling an unparalleled impact on their hearts.

"King Kong, let's go. I didn't expect you to know how to appreciate the sunrise..."

Zhuang Rui chuckled and patted Jin Gang on the shoulder before turning back to the rear cabin. They had already wasted seven or eight minutes watching the sunrise, and now it was time to deal with the prisoners.

What Zhuang Rui didn't know was that five or six nautical miles away from them, several speedboats were heading into the distance from different directions, and everything that was happening in the night was being watched by the people on the speedboats.

Of course, they only saw the frigate catch fire and explode; they didn't see details such as the launch of torpedoes.

These people were all scouts from various pirate organizations at sea. Liu Minghui's eagerness to kill Zhuang Rui and hijack the ship had long been noticed by these pirate organizations, and they might have even wanted Liu Minghui to lead the charge.

However, no matter how imaginative these pirates were, they could not have predicted that the final result would be the complete annihilation of Liu Minghui and his men, with their ships destroyed and all men killed.

It's important to understand that while Liu Minghui's pirate organization was only a rising star in Malacca, its firepower and warships were among the top three. This outcome left those pirate organizations that hadn't acted rashly feeling incredibly fortunate.

Although they didn't know what methods the merchant ship used, these pirate organizations all considered it a force not to be offended. The impact of this battle was something Zhuang Rui hadn't anticipated.

...

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui enter, Li Zhen quickly went to greet him, saying, "Brother Zhuang, everyone's here, not a single one ran away, except for Liu Minghui..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand, interrupting Li Zhen. He knew better than anyone how Liu Minghui died, and asked, "I understand. Are any of our brothers injured?"

When Zhuang Rui came in and immediately asked about their safety, the security personnel standing at the door with guns straightened their backs even more and looked at Zhuang Rui with more respect.

Putting aside the generous treatment Zhuang Rui gave them, at least in this matter, he showed them the most important respect and care, which warmed the hearts of the people scattered around the room.

Peng Fei leaned closer and said, "One of our brothers got grazed on the arm by a stray bullet, but it's nothing serious, he'll be fine after a couple of days of rest..."

At dawn, the sea was shrouded in thick fog, and the heavy machine guns on the enemy frigates were firing haphazardly at any lights. This kind of inaccurate shooting was the most troublesome, making it difficult to take effective evasive action.

The injured guy was really unlucky. He had a good hiding spot, a blind spot for the shooters, but he was unlucky and was hit by a ricocheting bullet that hit the side of the ship.

"Once we get back to Macau, each of the brothers on board will receive a bonus of 100,000, and the injured one will receive 200,000. Peng Fei, remember to distribute the money then..."

Zhuang Rui nodded, and what he said next made the eyes of the security personnel light up. When they looked at Zhuang Rui again, their gazes were filled not only with respect but also with a hint of gratitude.

The retired personnel Zhuang Rui recruited from Ouyang Lei's former special forces division were mostly from rural backgrounds and came from poor families. They were willing to risk their lives for such a generous boss.

"Brother Zhuang, thank you. On behalf of all the brothers, thank you..."

To Zhuang Rui's surprise, after Zhuang Rui said those words, Li Zhen, contrary to his usual playful demeanor, put away his smile and gave Zhuang Rui a serious salute.

There are many injustices in this world. Some people risk their lives in unknown fields, but often fail to ensure the safety of their families.

Li Zhen's situation is like this. His father passed away a few years ago, and his mother is seriously ill and bedridden. The little salary he received while in the army was not enough to pay for his mother's medical treatment, so he chose to transfer to Zhuang Rui's place.

Although Li Zhen seems a bit carefree, he is very disciplined in his work. The more than ten million US dollars that Zhuang Rui gave him were all used for the cruise ship renovation, and he did not take a single penny more than necessary.

Moreover, Zhuang Rui had never mentioned his family's difficulties, so Zhuang Rui's reward of 100,000 yuan to each of them was a relief for Li Zhen's urgent needs.

"Alright, enough with the formalities. Have you interrogated those prisoners yet?"

Zhuang Rui waved his hand. He was a little unaccustomed to being stared at with such respect. His thoughts were simple: these people were also born of parents and had followed him through thick and thin, so he couldn't treat them unfairly.

Zhuang Rui had no idea that by simply paying some money, he would gain a group of loyal subordinates, and even Li Zhen began to take Zhuang Rui seriously again.

In fact, these soldiers are relatively simple-minded. Giving them enough respect and a little bit of benefit will allow Zhuang Rui to control a fairly powerful armed force.

"Ask Peng Fei, he's an expert at this. That kid can remind people of bedwetting when he was three years old..."

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Zhen returned to his original state. Some people are grateful in their hearts but don't say it out loud.

"Brother Zhuang, we've interrogated the people we captured earlier, but we haven't had time to interrogate the two we caught later. Let me tell you about the situation..."

They were indeed organized by Liu Minghui. They had committed three crimes at sea before, and this was their fourth. They had previously hijacked a yacht and two oil tankers, and killed everyone on the last oil tanker..."

These pirates weren't particularly stubborn, and Peng Fei managed to pry them open with very little effort. However, Huo Jiang was like a dead pig that wasn't afraid of boiling water, and didn't utter a single word from beginning to end.

"Damn it, why didn't Datu come along..."

Upon hearing that it was that Malaysian tycoon who was eyeing his ship, Zhuang Rui snorted coldly. As for Liu Minghui, he was dead and his debts were settled, and he had died such a tragic death that Zhuang Rui no longer felt any hatred towards him.

"Brother Zhuang, what should we do with these people?"

When Peng Fei struck them with the clubs, he was very careful. None of the six men died; they were all tied up, gagged, and thrown into a nearby room.

These people are difficult to deal with because they committed the crime on the high seas, so it's impossible to hand them over to any specific country for trial. Moreover, these eight people alone represent six different nationalities.

Another major reason is that if he were to hand the weapon over to Interpol, they would definitely trace the source of his defensive weapon, which would be a very troublesome matter for Zhuang Rui.

After pacing around the room a few times with his head down, Zhuang Rui said with some difficulty, "Leave the last two behind. As for the rest, you can handle them..."

It wasn't that Zhuang Rui was being pretentious; it was just that so many lives had been lost with just a single sentence, and he felt a strange, indescribable feeling in his heart.

There's a sense of exhilaration, a touch of bewilderment and unease, but more than anything, it's a feeling of having everything under control. Perhaps this is why people in ancient times loved power?

"Brother Zhuang, each of them has several lives on their hands, they deserve to die..."

Peng Fei knew Zhuang Rui well. After hearing his order, he offered Zhuang Rui some words of advice, which made Zhuang Rui's expression much better.

"Go ahead, don't use any guns. Make sure the cleanup is done cleanly, so no one gets watching..."

Zhuang Rui let out a long sigh of relief. He had tried to kill the snake but ended up getting bitten instead. He didn't want to leave any future trouble for himself. These people were just as Peng Fei had said, all of them were desperate criminals. They wouldn't be grateful for him letting them live.

Peng Fei glanced at the two people at the door, waved, and said, "Liu Wu, Zhao Jun, you two come over here too, is that alright?"

Although Peng Fei's men were well-trained, their only shortcoming was a lack of real combat experience.

Moreover, although they are soldiers from special forces, many of them have never had blood on their hands. Peng Fei wanted them to truly experience a life of blood and fire.

Upon hearing Peng Fei's words, the two security guards at the entrance immediately stood at attention and shouted, "Reporting, Captain, no problem..."

After the two followed Peng Fei into a room next door, Li Zhen turned to Zhuang Rui and asked, "Brother Zhuang, what should we do with those two?"

"Our ship has suffered such great damage, shouldn't we get some compensation?"

Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this, and continued, "That skinny guy is the third-in-command in Liu Minghui's organization. I believe he knows a lot of things. Shura, this matter depends on your methods..."

Zhuang Rui had met Lao San at a casino in Macau and knew that he was the strategist in Liu Minghui's organization. People like him were the ones who knew the most.

"Brother Zhuang, don't worry, my skills are almost as good as Peng Fei's..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Zhen stood up and intended to go to the room where the two men were being held in solitary confinement.

"Wait a minute, I'll go with you later..."

Zhuang Rui suddenly heard a few muffled groans coming from the next room. Knowing what had happened inside, he felt a tightness in his chest.

Chapter 945 Aftermath (Part 3)

About seven or eight minutes later, Peng Fei walked out of the next room expressionlessly, while the two people behind him were pale and looked very unwell.

"Liu Wu, you usually train really hard, why are you chickening out now?" Peng Fei seemed dissatisfied with one of them and started scolding him after they came out.

Upon hearing Peng Fei's words, Liu Wu's expression turned even more grim. He glanced at Zhuang Rui inside the room and whispered, "Team...team leader, they...they are human beings too, not chickens to be slaughtered..."

Liu Wu was a model trainee in the army and thought he could do the same here, but Peng Fei's performance just now made him realize what cold-bloodedness and ruthlessness really meant.

"You...you motherfucker..."

Peng Fei glared at him, about to unleash a torrent of abuse. In their unit, there was no such thing as persuasion or education; whoever had the bigger fist was right.

"Peng Fei..."

Zhuang Rui stepped forward, stopped Peng Fei, and asked, "Liu Wu, how many people did these people kill in total?"

"About 40 or so. They killed more than 30 crew members when they hijacked the oil tanker a few days ago..."

Liu Wu was right next to Peng Fei when he interrogated these people, so he knew the exact numbers very well. He just didn't understand why Zhuang Rui was asking this.

"Where is the woman?" Zhuang Rui then asked.

"Ten...eleven women, all of them were raped and then murdered..."

As Liu Wu spoke, he slowly raised his head, which had been lowered, and straightened his chest. He seemed to understand Zhuang Rui's meaning.

After seeing Liu Wu's complexion return to normal, Zhuang Rui patted him on the shoulder and said, "It's good that you know. These people don't deserve to be called human. Death is the best end for them. If they didn't die, who knows how many more people would have died in this world..."

"Yes, President Zhuang, I understand!" After Zhuang Rui's explanation, Liu Wu finally resolved his inner conflict.

"Hehe, from now on, just call me Brother Zhuang..."

Zhuang Rui laughed. Sending such young men to witness death, even if their hearts are strong enough, would take them a while to process.

At that time, Zhuang Rui hated Muta to the core, but when he saw Muta being toyed with by King Kong and on the verge of death, he felt a pang of pity. However, he understood even more that being lenient with the enemy was being cruel to himself.

"Alright, Li Zhen, bring those two people out..."

Zhuang Rui glanced at his watch; it was already past six in the morning. He figured more and more people would wake up soon, and the ship's security personnel wouldn't be able to control the situation. Those employees from mainland companies certainly didn't have a strong sense of discipline.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Zhen turned around and went into a room. In just a few seconds, he dragged two people into the room where Zhuang Rui was.

"Oh....."

Even though what had just happened in the room next door, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh when he saw the two of them.

It's unclear whether Li Zhen did it or Peng Fei tied them up, but the two men were in a rather strange position. Their thumbs were tied upside down behind their backs, and their feet were also bent backwards, tied together with their thumbs like an acrobatic act, making their whole bodies appear as if they were in a reverse bow shape.

"Ptooeey, ptooeey..."

After Li Zhen threw the two men on the ground, he took the smelly socks out of their mouths, and the two men hurriedly spat out the socks.

"Big brother, big brother, I didn't mean to throw up on you, it just smells awful..."

The third brother, with his keen eyesight, saw Li Zhen's face harden and immediately began to explain, fearing that if things went wrong, his life would be over.

"Alright, Third Brother, we meet again..."

Zhuang Rui squatted down in front of the third brother. He knew that this man was Liu Minghui's strategist, but he didn't know whether he deserved to die or not, or how many bad things he had done.

"Mr. Zhuang... Mr. Zhuang, this... this isn't my fault. I advised my brother not to oppose you, but he's bewitched and just won't listen..."

When the third brother saw Zhuang Rui, his eyes darted around, and he squeezed out a few tears, loudly complaining that he looked just like a young wife who had been raped by Brother Hui.

"##@ ¥%....."

While the third brother was speaking, the person next to him started babbling incoherently, but he wasn't speaking English or Chinese, leaving Zhuang Rui completely confused.

"Brother Zhuang, he said he has some things to be honest with..."

Li Zhen understood; the man was speaking a local dialect of Malaysia, which most people wouldn't understand.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the third brother, nodded, and said, "Take him to the room next door..."

Seeing the Malay being taken away, the third brother had a bad feeling and quickly said, "Mr. Zhuang... Mr. Zhuang, you... you are a civilized man. If you are willing to let me go, I will tell you everything about Liu Minghui..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and shook his head, saying, "I'm a civilized person, but your behavior is far from civilized..."

"This...it was all Liu Minghui's idea. I'm just a nobody, there's no point in me saying anything..."

The third brother was just locked in a well-soundproofed room and has no idea what happened in the room next to him, so he's still hoping to slip away and escape.

While the third brother was speaking, Peng Fei, along with Liu Wu and Zhao Jun, used the ship's luggage cart to transport all the dead bodies out of the room, passing right by the open doorway.

According to Peng Fei, there are many sharks in this area. He just poured a basin of chicken blood into the sea, and it won't be long before a group of sharks will come to the sea below the boat. If these people are thrown in, they won't even be able to find their remains for long.

The third brother, who had fallen to the ground, came face to face with Huo Jiang, who was staring with wide, unseeing eyes. The third brother, who had been babbling in defense of himself, turned pale and shut his mouth tightly.

Even if you beat Lao San to death, you would never have imagined that Zhuang Rui, who seemed so refined and gentle, would be so ruthless. They had not provoked a sheep, but a ferocious wolf.

Li Zhen worked even faster than Peng Fei, coming out in just a few minutes. He walked up to Zhuang Rui and whispered, "Brother Zhuang, I found out. This plan was devised by him and Liu Minghui. They even said that everyone on board would be killed, including the women..."

Li Zhen stopped there, because Zhuang Rui was already furious. He kicked Li Zhen in the face. His wife and children were Zhuang Rui's Achilles' heel, and no one was allowed to disrespect them.

"Awooo!"

When Zhuang Rui got angry, Jin Gang, who had been squatting at the door pretending to be well-behaved and almost forgotten by Zhuang Rui, suddenly rushed over and lifted the third brother, who was half-bent on the ground, up with one arm.

"Oh my god, it's a ghost!"

The third brother had two front teeth kicked out by Zhuang Rui, so he spoke with a slight lisp. Moreover, he hadn't seen King Kong since entering the room, and now that he suddenly saw King Kong, he was terrified.

"Awooo!"

Seemingly understanding what Li Zhen had just said, Jin Gang changed his usual docile demeanor and slapped the third brother across the face with his right hand.

"King Kong, stop! Don't kill him!"

Zhuang Rui was alarmed. Although he did not intend to spare Lao San's life, the money that Liu Minghui had hidden was going to end up in Lao San's hands. If Lao San was killed by Jin Gang, wouldn't that be a waste?

Zhuang Rui stopped him a little too late. After being slapped by Jin Gang, Lao San's head slumped down, and blood kept spilling from the corner of his mouth.

Li Zhen went up and placed his hand on Lao San's neck. After a dozen seconds, he looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Brother Zhuang, he's dead..."

A single slap can break a person's cervical spine. How much strength does that take? King Kong's display of power made Li Zhen look at it differently. He originally thought this big guy was harmless, but he didn't expect it to be so fiery.

"Aww... Ho ho!"

King Kong pointed at the third brother on the ground, and then gestured. Zhuang Rui understood that King Kong meant the third brother was a bad guy who was trying to bully Fang Fang and Yuan Yuan, so it killed him.

"Alright, calm down. But from now on, you're not allowed to hurt anyone unless I'm around!"

Zhuang Rui couldn't bear to blame Jin Gang, as it only had the intelligence of a six or seven-year-old child and usually judged things based on its own preferences.

However, what Zhuang Rui regrets is that King Kong's slap has cost a lot of money. Modern pirates usually deposit their money in banks, so who knows which foreign bank will benefit from this?

Before Zhuang Rui could finish regretting his actions, Li Zhen gave him a surprise. He stood up with a USB drive in his hand and said, "Brother Zhuang, he has a USB drive on him. Do you think it might be useful?"

"Jin Gang, hand him over to Peng Fei..."

Zhuang Rui's eyes lit up as soon as he saw the USB drive. After calling out to Jin Gang, who was pretending to be innocent, he hurriedly left the room with the USB drive.

"Damn, being a pirate is a really promising career..."

In the monitoring room, Zhuang Rui and Li Zhen looked at each other, dumbfounded as they stared at the numbers on the computer screen.

Hui Ge's money was deposited anonymously in three Swiss banks. As long as you have the account number and password, you can withdraw it via telephone transfer. The total amount was 140 million US dollars, all of which went to Zhuang Rui.

A hundred million US dollars wasn't enough to make Zhuang Rui lose his composure. He just thought Brother Hui was really amazing. He had lost over a hundred million US dollars last time, but he was able to make up for it in such a short time.

After thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui said, "Shura, take ten million US dollars from this. Also, give each of the security personnel on the ship 500,000..."

Having received over 100 million US dollars, Zhuang Rui felt it wouldn't be fair to only give each person a reward of 100,000. He decided to give each person 500,000, so that even if he got the meat, his subordinates would at least have some soup to drink.

As for Li Zhen, Zhuang Rui gave him ten million not to shut him up, but because he felt Li Zhen deserved that much.

If Li Zhen hadn't discovered Jack's collusion with pirates, he probably would have been in grave danger. With a well-intentioned but unprepared attack, even if Peng Fei and Li Zhen were incredibly capable, the ship would likely have suffered heavy casualties.

Moreover, it was Li Zhen who ultimately discovered the USB drive; otherwise, Liu Minghui's fortune would have been lost at sea forever, perhaps only to be found inside a fish decades later.

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui was offering him ten million US dollars, Li Zhen nearly jumped up in shock and quickly said, "Brother Zhuang, I don't need that much, 500,000 is enough..."

"Well, having too much money isn't always a good thing. Take 500,000 for now, but if you need anything in the future, you can tell me or Peng Fei. Just name your price..."

Zhuang Rui nodded. He wasn't a stingy person, but giving Li Zhen ten million dollars directly was indeed ill-considered. Li Zhen was only 26 years old this year, and receiving ten million US dollars might not necessarily be a good thing.

"Thank you, thank you, Brother Zhuang..."

Li Zhen's vision blurred. He was a strong-willed person and hadn't even told Peng Fei about his mother's illness.

He had planned to have 100,000 yuan after this mission, and then borrow some more from Peng Fei to send his mother to a big hospital for treatment. Unexpectedly, he suddenly had another 500,000 yuan, which was enough for his mother's medical treatment.

"Why are you being so dramatic, kid?"

Zhuang Rui gave Peng Fei a disgruntled look, put away the USB drive, and said, "Go downstairs and help. The bullet holes on the hull can't be removed for now, but clean up all the other traces so the platform staff won't make a fuss..."

After this incident, Zhuang Rui found himself unsure whether he had become cold-blooded or broadened his horizons; in any case, the loss of seven or eight lives before his eyes did not feel so intense.

...

"Zhuang Rui, you're back. Are you alright?"

When Zhuang Rui pushed open the door and walked into the room, everyone's eyes turned to him. Qin Xuanbing even ran over and looked Zhuang Rui up and down.

"It's alright now. Our ship was attacked by pirates this morning, but we were repelled. Everyone, don't worry, let's go down for lunch..."

When Zhuang Rui mentioned eating, he couldn't help but think of what had just happened downstairs, and suddenly felt a little nauseous. He shook his head, took out a USB drive from his pocket, and looked at Yun Man, saying, "Yun Man, there are a few transactions here. Could you process them on the computer and transfer them to my overseas account?"

"Okay, I'll take care of it right away..."

Yunman was a little confused, but she still took it, said goodbye to Qin Xuanbing, and went back to her room.

Huangfu Yun glanced at his wife's retreating figure and said, "Zhuang Rui, how about... we turn back first? What if those pirates come again?"

The gunshots at dawn terrified Huangfu Yun. Although he was chivalrous, he was powerless to fight back.

"Oh no, why is my son peeing everywhere?"

After Zhuang Rui diverted Qin Xuanbing's attention with a single sentence, he looked at Huangfu Yun and whispered, "There won't be any more pirates coming, Brother Huangfu, don't worry..."

"You...you guys?" Huangfu Yun understood Zhuang Rui's words immediately upon seeing his expression, and his eyes widened in surprise.

Zhuang Rui patted Huangfu Yun on the shoulder and said, "It's alright, relax and have fun. Once this shipwreck is salvaged, we'll go back to Beijing together..."

Although the morning passed quickly, the cleanup work left Zhuang Rui feeling somewhat exhausted.

Chapter 946 Honesty

Although yesterday's drinking session left many people drunk, many others remained sober. After security lifted the restrictions, many left their rooms and went up to the deck. 68th.

The bloodstains on the deck had long been cleaned up, but the bullet holes on the ship's sides and hull could not be erased. In addition, these people had already heard the gunshots and explosions, and with the traces left behind, they immediately knew what had happened.

"Look, those are bullet holes..."

"Really? I heard gunshots, and I thought I was dreaming!"

"Hey, you were sleeping so soundly! The explosion was so loud, didn't you hear it?"

More than a dozen crew members and staff hired by Zhuang Rui gathered around the side of the ship that had been attacked, looking at the dented and battered metal hull, and began to discuss it amongst themselves.

However, the platform staff were relatively excited, while the crew members were pale and looked terrible, because they knew what the consequences would be if they were targeted by pirates at sea.

Whether it's taking hostages for ransom or killing hostages and hijacking a cruise ship, it would be a disaster for these crew members. Looking at the bullet holes left by the 10mm machine gun, many of them even turned around and ran to find Clyde.

"Zhuang, there's no need to release them anymore. I believe Jack is the mole..."

Clyde had already been invited by Zhuang Rui to a room in the lower deck. On the table in the middle of the room was a tape recorder playing Jack's last conversation with the pirates.

Zhuang Rui did not let Jack and the pirates disappear together. The appearance of pirates could not be hidden forever, and the disappearance of a first mate on the ship was something that could not be explained to Clyde.

Therefore, Zhuang Rui selected the last conversation between Jack and the third brother and played it for the captain to confirm that Jack had colluded with the pirates to plot something sinister.

Even after knowing Jack for over twenty years, Clyde couldn't speak up for him now. Moreover, with his first mate in trouble, Clyde himself was also partly to blame.

"Boss, please trust my professional ethics. I will resign as captain only after I have safely returned this ship to port..."

Clyde's face was somewhat somber as he spoke. He was reluctant to part with the cruise ship he had worked on for over twenty years, and after this incident, he would never be able to sail the seas again.

You have to understand that his first mate colluding with pirates is enough to ruin his reputation, and probably no ship owner would entrust their ship to Clyde again.

What did you say?

Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this, walked over to Clyde, patted him on the shoulder, and said, "This has little to do with you. This ship is counting on you to protect it..."

Finding a captain with extensive sailing experience is not an easy task, and Zhuang Rui himself had a very good impression of this bearded captain and had no intention of firing him.

"What? I can be the captain?" Clyde stood up excitedly upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words.

Clyde is only around fifty years old, a time when he is full of experience and energy. If he were to retire now, he would go crazy. Zhuang Rui's words gave him a glimmer of hope.

"Of course, but Captain Clyde, there's something I'd like to remind you of. Many of the crew members on this ship are lazy, addicted to drinking, gambling, and whoring. I personally think they're not very suitable to work on this ship..."

Zhuang Rui had just taken over the ship and it wasn't easy for him to fire some of the sailors who had worked on board for over ten years. However, he really couldn't stand their behavior, so he took this opportunity to bring it up.

"I know, boss, I've been too lenient with them. After we return from this voyage, I'll get rid of some of them and recruit some new crew members..."

Clyde had no room for negotiation at this point, and he knew perfectly well what kind of people his crew members were; the allure of Macau had blinded them.

Zhuang Rui waved his hand and said, "There's no need to recruit new crew members. I'll send a batch of people over. They've all received professional training and can start working right away..."

"Okay, as you wish, boss..."

Clyde was now completely convinced of Zhuang Rui's abilities and no longer looked down on him because of his age. He was able to successfully repel the pirate attack without a single casualty, something that even Clyde himself could not do.

"Alright, I'll go outside and check on things. You reassure the crew and tell them not to get emotional or upset..."

Zhuang Rui stood up. Now that he had dealt with Clyde, he needed to reassure the platform staff, otherwise their minds would definitely be unsettled upon hearing about the pirate attack.

Seeing Zhuang Rui stand up, Clyde quickly rose from his chair as well, saying, "Boss, I'll order the return flight right now..."

"Return? Oh... no, no, we'll have to stay here for at least another week. The shipwreck has been surveyed, and we're just waiting for the final salvage operation..."

Upon hearing that Clyde was about to leave, Zhuang Rui shook his head repeatedly and said, "Clyde, are you scared by these pirates? Have you forgotten why we set sail in the first place?"

"Oh, of course not, sir, I am a brave sailor..."

Clyde puffed out his chest, but then his face fell again. He continued, "Boss, our defenses are inadequate. I'm the only one on the ship with a pistol. If these pirates... if they come again, what... what are we going to do?"

Clyde's words made Zhuang Rui laugh involuntarily. This old guy is really interesting. Did he think that the gunshots he heard this morning were his security personnel setting off firecrackers?

Zhuang Rui frowned and paced back and forth in the room a few times. Suddenly, he stopped, looked at Clyde, and said, "Captain Clyde, can I trust you?"

As a captain, if he doesn't know the defense situation on his ship, he will make wrong judgments and decisions in many cases. Therefore, Zhuang Rui is considering whether to tell this bearded captain the truth.

Zhuang Rui did not intend to work on this ship long-term, nor did he intend to stay with Peng Fei and Li Zhen, so it was essential to be frank with Clyde.

"Boss, if you don't fire me, I'll sell my life to you. You can completely trust me..."

Clyde stood ramrod straight, thumping his chest loudly. Zhuang Rui was a little envious of the old man; at his age, he was in such good shape, and the captain's uniform made him look especially imposing.

Zhuang Rui pondered upon hearing this. He knew Clyde fairly well; the man had been married once, but due to his passion for the sea, he divorced his wife. One of his children lived with his ex-wife and now lived in Ireland, having almost no contact with Zhuang Rui anymore.

Clyde is quite self-disciplined. Although he occasionally goes to brothels, that's only human nature. Most importantly, he doesn't gamble. In Macau, people who can resist the temptation of gambling have exceptionally strong willpower.

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui smiled, extended his right hand to Clyde, and said, "Captain Clyde, I think... you should take a fresh look at your cruise ship..."

"Get to know each other again?"

Clyde was a little confused. He had worked on this ship for over twenty years and was extremely familiar with almost every screw. He didn't know what Zhuang Rui meant by "familiarity".

After shaking hands with Zhuang Rui as a reflex, Clyde asked dumbly, "What do you mean, 'know'?"

"Just follow me..." Zhuang Rui smiled and led the way to the lower deck.

"Brother Zhuang!"

As Zhuang Rui stepped out of the elevator on the second floor of the basement via a separate elevator, Liu Wu, who was standing guard outside the elevator, immediately stood at attention and saluted.

Beside Liu Wu was another security guard who also saluted Zhuang Rui with respect in his eyes. They had already heard about Zhuang Rui's reward of 500,000 RMB to all the security guards.

It must be said that money is indeed the most effective and direct way to win people's hearts. At least now, the dozen or so security personnel on this ship are willing to risk their lives for Zhuang Rui at any time!

"Why don't you take a rest? You've had a tough morning..."

Zhuang Rui greeted Liu Wu with a smile, then turned around, pointed at Clyde, and said, "Liu Wu, pass on the word: from now on, you must completely obey whatever Captain Clyde says..."

As the saying goes, "If you employ someone, don't doubt them; if you doubt someone, don't employ them." Since Zhuang Rui is prepared to confide in Clyde, he must let the captain control such an armed force so that he can make the most favorable judgment in the event of an emergency.

"Yes!" Liu Wu answered loudly without asking why, his attitude making Clyde quite embarrassed.

There were originally a few security guards on the ship, but they were lazy by nature. When Zhuang Rui kicked them out, Clyde had some complaints. Now it seems that those security guards are no match for Liu Wu in front of him.

Zhuang Rui pointed to the room where the torpedo launchers were located and said to Liu Wu, "Alright, open that door..."

"Boss, what exactly are you going to show me... to... heavens, this... this is a torpedo launcher?"

Clyde was initially puzzled by Zhuang Rui bringing him to the hold, but when Liu Wu opened the door, the bearded captain was stunned. He never dreamed that his merchant ship was equipped with such powerful offensive weapons.

"Oh, I didn't know our captain was a military expert? There's more to come that will surprise you..."

Seeing Claude's excited expression, Zhuang Rui laughed. Now he wouldn't ask to return to base, would he?

Chapter 947 Emerging from the Water (Part 1)

"Boss, hehe, you... I love you to death..."

After Zhuang Rui showed Clyde the three rooms, each equipped with a torpedo launcher and a cannon, Clyde's mouth gaped open in a wide grin, as if he wanted to hug Zhuang Rui and kiss him.

"Clyde, merchant ships are not allowed to carry heavy weapons. Aren't you afraid of being caught?"

Zhuang Rui was a little puzzled by Clyde's behavior. He thought that Clyde should be explaining the dangers of these weapons to him with great concern, but he did not expect the old man to react like this.

According to the conventions of the International Maritime Organization, merchant ships are not allowed to carry heavy weapons, because if merchant ships were allowed to carry weapons, how would they be distinguished from warships? This would be a threat to the sovereignty of all countries.

"Dear boss, don't be afraid. Oh God, I still can't believe these weapons are all ours..."

Clyde was clearly a little too excited. Seeing Zhuang Rui's displeased expression, he became serious and said, "Every merchant ship undergoes routine inspections upon entering port. Generally, the inspections are stricter in unfamiliar ports, but this ship has been docked in Macau for twenty years, and no one is interested in it anymore..."

After listening to Clyde's explanation, Zhuang Rui finally understood that he had unwittingly equipped himself with the weapons and had never considered the port inspection.

Zhuang Rui shook his head. He was truly ignorant and fearless. If he were to be found out, probably no port in the world would accept his cruise ship.

Merchant ships are not entirely prohibited from carrying weapons for self-defense. According to international law, even if merchant ships carry weapons, they cannot open fire indiscriminately. They only have the right to retaliate if attacked first by an adversary. The weapons they carry are merely a means of coping.

Moreover, even merchant ships carrying weapons can be hijacked. Clyde gave Zhuang Rui an example: just recently, a North Korean cargo ship was hijacked in the Indian Ocean. The crew was armed, but the experienced pirates disarmed them.

However, this cruise ship was too famous in Macau, so Clyde didn't care whether it was equipped with heavy weapons. In his view, these weapons would further ensure the safety of the cruise ship.

After Clyde calmed down, he suddenly remembered a question and looked at Zhuang Rui, asking, "By the way, boss, was the explosion this morning caused by a torpedo?"

"Oh, I don't know either. Maybe they were just unlucky, and their own ammunition exploded..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and shrugged, his expression innocent. But his appearance spoke volumes, and Clyde finally understood: the pirate ship hadn't escaped, but had sunk into the sea right in front of them.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Clyde clenched his fist and said fiercely, "That's great, boss! When we head back, let's slow down. I'm going to wipe out all the pirates in Malacca!"

Zhuang Rui said irritably, "Come on, don't use these weapons unless absolutely necessary. A single torpedo costs hundreds of thousands of dollars..."

Looking at Clyde's indignant appearance, Zhuang Rui was quite suspicious. Could this old man have been captured by pirates and had his anus violated before? Why did he get so excited at the mere mention of "pirates"?

You know, women are rarely seen at sea, and the place where homosexuals are most concentrated is the sailors at sea. If Clyde shaved his beard, he must have been a handsome young man when he was young.

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but shudder, and the way he looked at Clyde changed slightly.

"Hehe, boss, those pirates are all rich. They rob merchant ships, so it's only right for us to rob pirates..."

Clyde's words dispelled Zhuang Rui's doubts; otherwise, he truly wouldn't have trusted entrusting the ship to a captain with such peculiar tastes. However, Clyde's idea was undeniably wishful thinking.
0800.00

Zhuang Rui said, half-laughing and half-crying, "Alright, Clyde, you're the captain of this salvage ship. Our mission is exploration, to search for ancient shipwreck treasures, not to do what those damn soldiers do..."

Putting everything else aside, the speed of this cruise ship is far inferior to that of those small ships. We can't just launch torpedoes every time we meet without saying a word, can we? Zhuang Rui doesn't have that many torpedoes to spare.

Seeing that Clyde still wanted to speak, Zhuang Rui quickly waved his hand and said, "Alright, go find Li Zhen and tell him it was me who said to connect this monitoring system to the captain's cabin, so you can control it in real time from now on..."

"Thank you, boss..."

Zhuang Rui's actions undoubtedly handed over control of the entire ship to him. Although Clyde didn't understand the meaning of "a scholar dies for one who understands him," he was now determined to serve Zhuang Rui.

"Stop with the nonsense. We still need the crew to work. Go and send out a notice telling them the pirates won't be coming anymore, so they can focus on their work. But... the ship's weapon systems still need to be kept secret..."

If Clyde was so panicked before, one can imagine how panicked the crew below must be. Zhuang Rui was afraid that if he didn't agree to return to port, the crew would probably unload their small boats and row back by themselves.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Clyde realized the seriousness of the matter and immediately went to the captain's cabin to issue a notice.

Clyde's authority on the ship was truly exceptional; his voice calmed the restless crew members.

As for the platform staff, their reaction was minimal. The pirate attack only provided them with a novel experience and bragging rights for the future. Many of them even felt resentful for not being able to see the pirates.

After everyone on board had rested for a day, the salvage operation continued. Developing a salvage plan was a rather complicated task, leaving Zhuang Rui and several other experts feeling quite exhausted.

Because the shipwreck is located more than 2,000 meters below the seabed and contains a large number of precious cultural relics, the difficulty of salvaging the entire ship is no less than that of salvaging the Titanic, even though the two are many times larger.

Three days later, thanks to Zhuang Rui's insistence, a plan was finally formulated. The shipwreck was named "Maritime Silk Road No. 1", and the salvage operation was called "Maritime Silk Road No. 1 Salvage Project"!

...

"Quickly, send down thirty more pontoons. Yes, pump out the air. Make sure all the pontoons are filled with gas simultaneously as soon as possible..."

Two more days passed, and all preparations were complete. Starting at 4:30 in the morning, the crew on board were busy, and the roar of the engines could be heard far and wide.

Zhuang Rui's salvage ship was bustling with activity. The huge platform had been moved to the sea surface, and 160 buoys had been sunk into the sea. Each unit consisted of 40 buoys, and all the ropes were connected together.

Meanwhile, two underwater robots are busy at work. Operated by the platform, the two robots need to tie four specially made ropes to the ancient shipwreck on the seabed. This task alone has taken two days.

It's important to understand that although this ancient shipwreck looks very sturdy, the points where it's secured have to withstand the pulling force of the buoys. If it can't withstand the force, not only will the hull be damaged, but everything on board will also suffer catastrophic destruction.

"Group one, group one, report on preparations..."

"Commander-in-Chief, all preparations are complete, and we are ready to ascend at any time..."

"Reporting to Commander-in-Chief, Group Two is ready..."

"Reporting to the Commander-in-Chief, Groups Three and Four are ready..."

There were four groups controlling the buoys, while the deep-sea robot that had completed the binding work used a specially made fishing net with a length and width of more than forty meters.

This fishing net was originally a seine net used for pulling fishing boats. It was made of steel wire and rope and was exceptionally tough. Zhuang Rui had specially contacted the Macau authorities to have it delivered to them.

"Mr. Zhuang, what do you think? Can we begin?"

In the monitoring room on the platform, although Engineer Zhang was the commander-in-chief, he still had to follow Zhuang Rui's instructions, after all, Zhuang Rui was the real boss.

After two days of debate, Engineer Zhang was extremely impressed with Zhuang Rui. A young man who had never done deep-sea salvage before actually knew every detail.

What impressed Zhang Gong even more was that Zhuang Rui accurately located four reinforcement points simply by using the images transmitted by the underwater robot. After two days of testing, it was shown that these four reinforcement points could withstand the tension brought by the pontoon.

"start!"

Zhuang Rui was also somewhat excited. China's shipwreck salvage technology has always lagged behind the international level, especially in the field of deep-sea salvage, where it is far behind developed countries. His attempt will open a new chapter in the maturity of China's deep-sea salvage technology.

Of course, although the ship was registered in Panama and this was international waters, Zhuang Rui still considered this action as a state action.

Zhuang Rui has already contacted his mentor, Professor Meng, and estimates that Professor Meng will arrive with a group of underwater salvage experts by this time tomorrow at the latest.

"Groups one, two, three, four, get ready! Inject one-third of the air into the pontoons, begin!"

With Zhang's command, the huge air pump on the cruise ship roared to life, and the specially connected hoses rapidly expanded, allowing air to flow into more than a hundred pontoons.

Due to the buoyancy of the pontoons themselves, they only sank to a depth of more than 200 meters in the ocean. After air entered the pontoons, the more than 100 pontoons immediately and slowly floated up.

The ropes connecting the pontoons and the sunken ship gradually began to straighten from their loose state.

Chapter 948 Emerging from the Sea (Part Two)

The process of the buoy inflating and rising was extremely slow. To the naked eye, the underwater camera footage showed almost no movement from the buoy. Zhuang Rui and his team stared wide-eyed at the screen.

Of course, what they were looking at was not the pontoons, but the sunken ship on the seabed. As the ropes slowly tightened, everyone became tense. Whether they could pull the sunken ship out of the seabed mud and sand depended on this one move.

The rope, which had been floating loosely in the water like seaweed, finally began to tighten after seven or eight minutes. At that moment, Zhuang Rui's heart was in his throat, and his eyes were fixed on the monitor in front of him.

"Oh no, the third rope on the right is moving too slowly. Three groups, three groups, immediately fill your group's float with another third of the air..."

Zhuang Rui discovered that the four ropes on the sunken ship were not synchronized. Three of them were about to tighten, while the other was still loose. As a result, the ship would inevitably lose its balance once the ropes tightened.

Zhuang Rui disregarded the fact that Engineer Zhang was the commander-in-chief, grabbed the walkie-talkie, gave orders, then threw the walkie-talkie aside and looked at the screen again.

With the roar of the air pumps on the deck, Zhuang Rui realized that the loose rope had finally caught up with the speed ahead, and he breathed a sigh of relief.

However, Zhuang Rui's heart jumped again in the short time it took to catch his breath, because the pontoon had begun to exert force, and it could be seen on the screen that the ancient ship, which had been silent in the sea for thousands of years, was slowly rocking.

The ship is nearly 30 meters long. According to Zhang and others' measurements, the total tonnage of the hull and the cargo inside is about 700 tons, which is almost equivalent to the power of the drilling platform.

Over the millennia, the seabed must have changed. Almost half of the ship was submerged in the seabed silt. Although the ship rocked, it did not break free of the sea surface as Zhuang Rui and the others had hoped.

The only consolation is that the four reinforcement points chosen by Zhuang Rui were extremely sturdy, and no cracks appeared in the hull. One of the most significant challenges in deep-sea salvage has now been resolved.

After observing for a while, Engineer Zhang looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Mr. Zhuang, I think we need to increase the buoyancy..."

Seeing that a rigid connection had formed between the pontoon and the sunken ship, Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "Okay, but we need to inject air little by little. If we still can't pull it out, we'll use the floating crane to give us a boost, but we need to be careful in the operation..."

Zhuang Rui chose to use the buoyancy of the pontoons to pull the sunken ship because this method is relatively "gentle" and less likely to damage the ship. In contrast, the power of the floating crane and the push arm is too great, and the sunken ship could be destroyed if not handled carefully.

The sunken ship has already begun to loosen. As long as Zhuang Rui operates carefully, he can achieve his goal. He only needs to lift the sunken ship out of the sea a little bit. As long as he can lay the fishing net underneath, he will have succeeded.

"Begin injecting air into the pontoon, be prepared to stop at any time..."

After Zhang Gong relayed the order, the sunken ship on the screen shook even more violently. At an altitude of several thousand meters, it was impossible to maintain perfect balance, and some utensils in the cabin tilted and slid down.

"Mr. Zhuang, these scattered items can be retrieved using robots later, so don't worry..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui looked a little pale, Zhang Gong quickly comforted him and secretly rejoiced. If he had followed his method and used a floating crane to pull it up directly, Zhuang Rui would probably have only gotten a pile of junk.

Zhuang Rui shook his head and said, "It's alright, this was expected. If you can maintain your balance, you won't have to go through all this trouble..."

As the buoy's pulling force increased, the seabed churned, and the clear seawater became turbid, making it difficult to see even under the illumination of twelve strong lights.

Zhuang Rui suddenly picked up the walkie-talkie and shouted, "Stop! Stop the air injection!"

Zhuang Rui's actions stunned everyone. The situation was still unclear, so why did Zhuang Rui call a halt?

"Look at the screen quickly..." Zhuang Rui didn't have time to explain, his eyes fixed on the image transmitted by the underwater robot.

Zhang stared at the screen for a long time, but it was still completely blurry. He couldn't help but ask, "What's wrong, Mr. Zhuang?"

"The shipwreck has already broken free of the seabed silt, so stop using the pontoons. Even if they're filled with air, they won't have enough pulling force to bring it to the surface..."

Zhuang Rui stared intently at the screen, which puzzled everyone in the room. They couldn't understand why Zhuang Rui was so certain when they were all looking at the same screen.

Zhuang Rui was certainly certain. Although his spiritual energy couldn't directly see the sunken ship, by sensing the spiritual energy of the objects on the ship, he discovered that an object he had been focusing on had fallen in a straight line with the center of the ship's cabin, which meant that the bottom of the ship had detached from the seabed.

After the buoys stopped pumping air in, the frequency of the shipwreck's rocking decreased significantly. After about twenty minutes, the silt stirred up by the shipwreck finally settled, and the seawater returned to its clear state.

"It's...it's really out..."

"Oh my god, it's out! It's out!"

"We did it! We pulled it out!"

Upon seeing the scene on the screen again, the platform's monitoring room erupted in excitement, as light could be seen from the bottom of the shipwreck, meaning that the ancient ship had broken free from the silt.

How to pull the sunken ship out of the sea intact is the biggest challenge of this salvage operation and the most debated point when formulating the plan.

Now Zhuang Rui has proven himself right with his method. At this moment, everyone, from the staff operating the robot to the staff adjusting the camera, looked at Zhuang Rui with admiration and spontaneously applauded.

Engineer Zhang also held Zhuang Rui in high esteem, clapping as he said, "Mr. Zhuang, well done! If you were to enter this industry, we'd all be out of a job..."

"Alright, Mr. Zhang, stop flattering me. You're the expert in salvage and equipment. Let's move on to the next step and get the sunken ship to the surface as soon as possible. Only then will our work be truly finished..."

Zhuang Rui has been in the limelight for the past few years, and has accumulated a lot of titles. He didn't take Zhang Gong's flattery to heart, but was thinking about the next step of his work.

However, Zhuang Rui's words made Zhang Gong look at him even more highly. At such a young age, he was so humble and composed. No wonder others were able to build such a large business from scratch.

The next task was relatively simple. Under the operator's control, two underwater robots slowly laid a large net under the sunken ship. Due to buoyancy, the net immediately wrapped the sunken ship.

Upon seeing this, everyone cheered. If nothing unexpected happens, the first deep-sea shipwreck salvaged by the Chinese may well be their work.

"There's still a lot of work to be done, everyone must be extremely careful, and absolutely cannot allow this ancient ship to suffer any damage..."

When Zhuang Rui saw that some people had already started celebrating, he quickly poured cold water on their enthusiasm. The sunken ship hadn't surfaced yet, and there were still many variables. If a storm broke out at sea, it would be a very troublesome and difficult problem to solve.

"Well, once this job is done, I'll personally give everyone a reward of 50,000 RMB each..."

While wielding the big stick, Zhuang Rui also offered these people a sweet treat. His words immediately made everyone's eyes light up. Fifty thousand yuan was half a year's salary for many people in the room, and this reward was quite substantial.

After the ropes connecting the fishing net and the floating crane were finally put in place, more than 10 hours had passed.

It was already past 3 a.m., but everyone in the monitoring room was working with complete focus and without the slightest slack. It has to be said that Zhuang Rui's reward played a significant role in this.

"Mr. Zhuang, we can finally breathe a sigh of relief. As long as the sea is calm tomorrow, the sunken ship should surface around noon..."

After the finger-thick steel cable on the floating crane began to wind, Zhang rubbed his bloodshot eyes and let out a long sigh.

The sunken ship is currently rising to the surface at a steady pace. Considering the pressure on the seabed, this speed is very slow. At a depth of over 3,000 meters, it is estimated that it will take several hours for it to surface.

"Thank you, Engineer Zhang, thank you everyone!"

Zhuang Rui's tense heart relaxed at this moment. He stood up and bowed to everyone, but in his heart he was thinking about whether to spend some money to poach these people.

Everyone has their own area of expertise. Zhuang Rui could only talk the talk, but he knew absolutely nothing about the actual operation. He knew that if he relied on himself, he probably wouldn't even be able to salvage a shipwreck that was more than 30 meters deep, let alone 3,000 meters deep.

"President Zhuang, please don't say that. This is our job, and didn't you even give us an extra bonus?"

"Yes, Mr. Zhuang, it's so much more satisfying to work for you. Damn it, those guys at head office never care about our lives..."

These people had become quite familiar with Zhuang Rui over the past few days, and upon seeing his actions, they all started shouting loudly. Zhuang Rui was increasingly pleased to hear this, thinking, "I'm not afraid of your emotions; otherwise, I wouldn't be able to poach your people."

Time flies, and in the blink of an eye, it was already bright outside. Everyone in the monitoring room stared at the monitor with bloodshot eyes, looking nervously at the monitor.

As the shipwreck drew closer to the surface, the atmosphere in the monitoring room grew increasingly tense. The moment the ancient shipwreck surfaced would rewrite the history of China's inability to conduct deep-sea salvage operations, a truly thrilling moment.

Just as the atmosphere in the monitoring room was tense, Peng Fei suddenly walked in and whispered in Zhuang Rui's ear, "Brother Zhuang, two ships are approaching us. Li Zhen just made some contact; they're research vessels from China..."

"Damn, they really know how to rush!"

Zhuang Rui muttered something to himself and stood up. Although he had asked for help on his own initiative, the timing of their arrival was just too perfect.

Chapter 949 Emerging from the Sea (Part 3)

"Mr. Zhang, please keep an eye on things while I go out to meet someone..."

Although he inwardly grumbled, Zhuang Rui still had to greet his teacher when he arrived. Besides, he was currently the only archaeology major on the ship, and there was a severe shortage of related technical personnel.

Once the sunken ship surfaces, tens of thousands of ancient artifacts on board will need to be sorted and organized. Even if Zhuang Rui worked himself to death, he couldn't finish the task. Therefore, seeking help from within the country is essential.

Of course, the ownership of these shipwreck artifacts still belongs to Zhuang Rui. The most these people can do is add the title of participating in China's first successful deep-sea salvage, but Zhuang Rui doesn't care much about such honors.

"Brother Zhuang, they even brought a tugboat with them?"

Peng Fei also came up from the monitoring room to the deck and stood with Zhuang Rui on the ship's side next to the spiral staircase to welcome the experts from China.

"That's their problem, we don't need to..."

Zhuang Rui curled his lip upon hearing this. Some relevant departments in China just don't act with any sense of magnanimity. It's ridiculous to even look at them. Using a tugboat to tow a sunken ship? They might be willing to do it, but they wouldn't be willing to do it themselves. How could those people even think of such a thing?

After waiting for about twenty minutes, Professor Meng and his group transferred to a small boat and finally boarded the deck. Zhuang Rui hurriedly went to greet them, saying, "Professor, I was so worried about you coming here in person..."

Professor Meng was originally leading the excavation of Liu Xiu's tomb in Henan Province, and the work had made great progress, with more than ten discoveries that could fill gaps in domestic archaeology, attracting considerable attention both at home and abroad.

However, when Professor Meng heard that Zhuang Rui was salvaging a shipwreck in the South China Sea and received Zhuang Rui's distress call, he immediately put down his work, gathered a group of

domestic underwater salvage experts and archaeologists, and rushed here overnight. Putting everything else aside, this friendship is indeed very touching.

"Don't speak to the teacher like you're a businessman..."

Professor Meng looked at Zhuang Rui with feigned anger, then said, "But Zhuang, after these items are salvaged, you need to let us study them properly first, there's no rush to put them in the museum..."

Professor Meng wasn't truly angry. For a teacher, seeing a student succeed is incredibly sweet, like eating honey. Moreover, Zhuang Rui's project will fill a gap in the country's underwater archaeology, so Professor Meng was filled with joy.

"I'll do exactly what you say, teacher, I'll do it your way..."

Professor Meng's words made Zhuang Rui smile wryly: "Well, he just said he was a businessman, and now he's starting to haggle..."

However, Zhuang Rui had no reason to refuse his teacher's request, as it was as if someone was dating these shipwreck artifacts for him for free.

"Yes, you already know these people, so I don't need to introduce them. Tell us about the salvage operation..."

Accompanying Professor Meng were not only people from the archaeological community, but also several experts in the appraisal of antiques and ceramics. Zhuang Rui had been in this field for several years and was quite familiar with these people.

Behind the experts were seven or eight young people who looked to be no more than twenty years old. Zhuang Rui knew that these were probably students from the school who had come for an internship. For them, such an opportunity was rare.

"Xiao Zhuang, you never make a move unless you're really going to cause a big commotion..."

The speaker was an old acquaintance of Zhuang Rui, Professor Tian from the Palace Museum. Since the "Cizhou Official Kiln Incident," Zhuang Rui and Professor Tian had become close friends despite their age difference, and their relationship was quite good.

"Hehe, Teacher Tian, now that you say that, I'm going to get really proud..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and ushered the group into the monitoring room inside the platform. Of course, the students were left outside, watching the floating crane work with curiosity. Everything at sea was new and exciting to them.

"Old Tian is right, Xiao Zhuang, you've brought us quite a few surprises these past two years..." Professor Meng walked side by side with Zhuang Rui, his heart filled with emotion.

Zhuang Rui's initial acquisition of the Dingguang Sword confirmed the existence of the legendary ancient imperial sword. Later, his discovery of pirate treasure overseas brought great fame to the Chinese archaeological community on the world stage.

The recent discovery of a Han Dynasty imperial tomb in Henan Province is also related to Zhuang Rui. If he hadn't followed the clues and had the two brothers, Da Niu, lead the way, the imperial tomb might have been destroyed by tomb robbers.

Now Zhuang Rui is even more remarkable. Deep-sea archaeology has always been a blind spot in the Chinese archaeological community. The country has spent more than ten years and still failed to salvage the Nanhai No. 1, which had already been surveyed.

Zhuang Rui's first operation involved salvaging a shipwreck at a depth of 3,000 meters, highlighting the immense technical challenges involved and making it a rare feat in the history of deep-sea salvage worldwide.

"Engineer Zhang, this is my mentor, Professor Meng. Professor, this is the chief commander in charge of this salvage operation, Engineer Zhang..."

As they entered the monitoring room on the platform, Zhuang Rui introduced the staff members inside to Professor Meng and the others. When it comes to salvaging the sunken ship, it's these people who are the key.

"Professor Meng, I've heard so much about you. Now that you're here, I'll hand over the reins of command..."

After Zhuang Rui introduced Professor Meng to Engineer Zhang, Engineer Zhang immediately prepared to relieve himself of his burden. He had been paying close attention to the underwater situation day and night for the past few days, and he looked much more haggard than when he arrived.

"No, everyone has their own area of expertise. I can talk about history, but this old man doesn't understand these things. Engineer Zhang, you continue to direct. What happens after the ship is salvaged is my job..."

Professor Meng waved his hand and said with a smile, but he took a few quick steps and stared at the ancient shipwreck that was slowly rising.

At this point, the ancient shipwreck was still a couple hundred meters below the surface of the sea. Even without a strong light, the outline of the shipwreck could be vaguely seen.

"That's right, it's a Song Dynasty shipwreck. Look at the high bow and smooth lines; those are definitely characteristics of Song Dynasty ships. Xiao Zhuang, you've filled another gap in the country's deep-sea archaeology this time..."

Professor Meng stared intently at the ancient ship wrapped in fishing nets on the screen. Putting aside the value of the artifacts inside the shipwreck, the shipwreck itself was of considerable value to the study of ancient Chinese maritime history.

"Those people in the Ministry of Transport could all go home and grow sweet potatoes, they're a disgrace..."

Professor Tian suddenly said something from the side, which surprised Zhuang Rui, who asked, "Professor Tian, what does this have to do with the Ministry of Transport?"

"How can it not be their business? The salvage operation can only be carried out with their consent and guidance. But the Nanhai No. 1 has been discovered for more than ten years, and a lot of things have been salvaged from it, but the entire ship has not yet been brought to the surface. Compared to you, this is just a bunch of people who are taking advantage of others' positions..."

Professor Tian was somewhat indignant. He himself was a researcher of ancient ceramics and naturally wanted to find more physical examples of Song Dynasty export porcelain. However, over the years, the amount of these items salvaged by the government was less than what private fishermen had managed to retrieve.

Zhuang Rui only learned from Professor Tian's explanation that salvaging sunken ships in China requires approval from the Ministry of Transport, and that experts dispatched by the Ministry must be in charge of the salvage operation.

As for those qualified salvage companies, nine out of ten are subordinate enterprises of the ministry. Their professional skills are not very good, but there are plenty of people who do nothing.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui felt incredibly fortunate. "Luckily, I didn't try to take advantage of the situation back home, or those old men would have skinned me alive."

After sitting in the monitoring room for a while, Engineer Zhang stood up and said, "President Zhuang, Professor Meng, the sunken ship will surface in about half an hour. Let's go outside and wait..."

"Okay, everyone get out. Be careful and don't lean against the ship's side..."

Zhuang Rui nodded and gave a few instructions to the experts. The ship was tens of meters high, and if someone fell off it, even if it was seawater below, they would be seriously injured if not killed by the shock.

Hearing that the sunken ship was about to be brought to the surface, everyone became excited and walked out of the monitoring room to the deck between the platform and the floating crane.

The cruise ship's floating crane and platform form a triangle, with the wrecked ship being brought to the surface in the middle. The deck is now filled with people.

Not only the platform staff, but also the crew members were seeing this for the first time, and they all gathered around to watch the excitement. Even the bearded captain came over in person, taking out binoculars and observing the sea surface as if it were a serious matter.

But the most eye-catching of all was the King Kong duo. A little guy was sitting on one of King Kong's shoulders, excitedly weaving in and out of the crowd. This guy was a real attention-seeker; the more people there were, the happier he became.

Zhuang Rui had no time to teach Jin Gang a lesson at the moment. His eyes were fixed on the sea, and he used his spiritual energy to sense the rising sunken ship.

"Fifty meters..."

"Forty meters..."

"Twenty meters..."

"Ten meters..."

Real-time data kept coming from the walkie-talkie, and when it reached five meters, the calm seawater began to churn, and a tall wooden pole appeared on the surface. Zhuang Rui knew that this was the broken mast.

"They're out!"

"Look, a big ship is coming out..."

"It's all made of wood, and there's quite a lot of stuff on the ship..."

After more than a week of intense work, the ancient shipwreck from the Song Dynasty finally surfaced, revealing its mysterious veil.

In an instant, all the staff on the cruise ship cheered, and many people took off their hats and threw them high into the air.

The recovery of the sunken ship not only signifies the completion of their work, but also sets a new record in China's deep-sea salvage history. At this moment, everyone's heart is filled with joy.

Through the gaps in the fishing net, you can clearly see that the wood of this ancient ship has a slight reddish tinge, and the parts of the hull that are not rotten, except for the broken mast, are basically well preserved.

Chapter 950 Picking the Peaches? (Part 1)

On the vast sea, the deafening roar of the cruise ship echoed through the air. After the sunken vessel was brought to the surface, the platform and floating cranes faced immense pressure, bearing the weight of hundreds of tons, and were operating at near-maximum power.

The workers operating the machines were very careful, slowly moving the boom of the floating crane. The sunken ship was rising almost inch by inch, slowly moving towards the already empty cruise ship deck.

When the leaders of the relevant domestic departments saw the sunken ship, they immediately looked embarrassed. The tugboat they brought was not even as big as this ship, and seeing how carefully others were handling it, they knew that Zhuang Rui would definitely not give them any credit.

"A little higher, a little higher, good!"

"A little to the left, a little more, gently, don't break anything on the ship..."

"Slow down, slower, Lao Yu, aren't you supposed to be able to lift a cigarette with a crane arm?"

These workers all knew that Zhuang Rui had given them a raise, so they worked very carefully. Instructions were relayed from the ship to the operators, and all the work was carried out in an orderly manner.

After more than three hours of work, the ancient shipwreck, which had been submerged for over a thousand years, was finally safely placed on the deck.

The ship's hull, gleaming with a faint reddish sheen, exudes a sense of vicissitude under the direct sunlight, as if it has weathered a thousand years of storms.

To facilitate future transportation, the fishing nets were still in place, but the ropes on them had been removed. Zhuang Rui walked in the front row, standing side by side with Professor Meng next to the ancient shipwreck.

"Clang... clang clang..."

Zhuang Rui tapped the hull with his hand, producing a metallic clanging sound. This Song Dynasty ship, after a thousand years, not only showed no signs of decay, but its hull seemed even sturdier than before.

"It has great historical significance, great archaeological significance, and great cultural value!"

Professor Meng gently stroked the shipwreck, his face unusually excited, uttering three significant words in succession. Even when Liu Xiu's tomb was unearthed, Zhuang Rui had never seen his teacher so distraught.

Seeing that his teacher was emotional and had traveled overnight by boat, Zhuang Rui was worried that something might happen to the elderly man's health, so he quickly said, "Teacher, why don't you rest for a while before we start cleaning?"

Because direct sunlight can alter the wooden structure of the shipwreck, workers are currently setting up a makeshift sunshade on it. Zhuang Rui's idea is to wait until they finish their work before proceeding with the shipwreck cleanup.

It should be noted that even with a rough visual estimate, there are at least tens of thousands of artifacts on the ship. The porcelain pieces alone, densely packed together, are countless, not to mention the numerous gold and silver vessels scattered throughout the ship.

The work of cleaning cultural relics is not just about taking things out randomly; it also requires numbering and classifying them, which is very tedious. Zhuang Rui estimates that it would take at least ten days to half a month to complete this cleaning work alone.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Professor Meng waved his hand and said, "No need, let's start now. Xiao Zhuang, you haven't realized the importance of this ship yet. Its value is no less than that of the Terracotta Army in Shaanxi..."

According to Professor Meng, the discovery and salvage of this early Song Dynasty shipwreck is significant not only because it contained tens of thousands of rare treasures, but also because it holds unimaginable information and extraordinary academic value.

Because the shipwreck was located on the "Maritime Silk Road" route, and because its collection was exceptionally rich and valuable in both quantity and variety, it provides the most credible model for the study of this period of history.

Furthermore, the exploration and excavation of this shipwreck can restore and fill a historical gap closely related to the ancient Chinese "Maritime Silk Road".

It's important to understand that this maritime trade predates Zheng He's voyages to the Western Ocean by a considerable margin, demonstrating China's formidable manufacturing capabilities at the time. Its Age of Exploration far surpassed that of medieval maritime powers like England and Portugal.

Professor Meng and Zhuang Rui had different perspectives on the shipwreck. After Professor Meng finished explaining the value of the shipwreck, Zhuang Rui stuck out his tongue a little embarrassedly. It turned out that even as an archaeology professional, he had become obsessed with money and only judged it based on its cultural relic value.

"That's right, Xiao Zhuang, is the room for storing these items ready? Remember, the room needs to be dry, otherwise the glaze on these porcelain pieces will oxidize and fade..."

Professor Tian was also eager to participate. These Song Dynasty export porcelains are of great significance to the study of the history of ancient export ceramics and maritime trade in the South China Sea.

The world generally believes that the Tang Dynasty was the pinnacle of China's feudal dynasties, but this is not the case. From a commercial perspective, the Song Dynasty was one of the most economically prosperous, technologically advanced, and culturally flourishing dynasties in Chinese history, and it was also the country with the most inventions and innovations in the world at that time.

Song Dynasty porcelain, apart from some Yuan Dynasty porcelain that has become almost unique pieces, is the most sought-after porcelain on the international market, and its price has always remained high.

Therefore, Professor Tian was eager to observe the differences between these export porcelains and domestic official and folk porcelains from the Song Dynasty.

"Alright, the rooms are all ready. Everyone can board the ship, but be careful, there's some seaweed on board that can be slippery..."

Seeing that both teachers said so, Zhuang Rui had no reason to stop them. After he nodded, someone immediately set up a ladder and boarded the ancient ship in batches.

One by one, precious porcelain or gold and silver artifacts were passed down from the ship. This work was extremely tedious, and it continued until late at night when the deck lights were turned on, and there were still four or five trainees busy on the ship.

Although Professor Meng and the others were in high spirits, their bodies simply couldn't keep up. Zhuang Rui persuaded them to go and rest. However, Zhuang Rui stayed on site the whole time, and he couldn't bear to lose even one of these things.

"Mr. Zhuang, do you have a moment? I'd like to have a chat with you..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was wiping a bronze mirror clean and putting it into a plastic bag, a voice came from below the boat.

"And you are?"

Zhuang Rui stuck his head out and saw a fair-skinned, chubby man in his forties. Zhuang Rui vaguely remembered him; this man seemed to have boarded the ship with Professor Meng, but the teacher hadn't introduced him, so Zhuang Rui hadn't paid much attention.

"Mr. Zhuang, my name is Dou Zhe. I work for the Ministry of Transport, specifically in charge of maritime transportation. Our leaders have given high praise to your salvage operation. I think we could find a place to discuss this..."

The man introduced himself, and Zhuang Rui was stunned. This official was quite high-ranking, actually a department-level cadre. He wiped his hands and climbed down the ladder next to the ship.

"Director Dou, please come to the room and sit down..."

Although he didn't know what the bureau chief wanted to talk to him about, Zhuang Rui didn't want to offend anyone for no reason. It was already past 1 a.m., so the fact that the other party had come to see him showed that he was sincere.

"Director Dou, what brings you here?" After sitting down, Zhuang Rui made Director Dou a cup of coffee. He had been relying on it to stay awake these past few days, and there were no other drinks on the ship.

Director Dou seemed to know Zhuang Rui's background. He stood up, accepted the coffee with both hands, and said, "Mr. Zhuang, on behalf of my superiors, I would like to congratulate you on the success of this deep-sea salvage operation..."

"Hehe, Director Dou, thank you for your concern, but as you can see, this work is quite busy. The artifact cleaning is only halfway done, if..."

Zhuang Rui didn't finish his sentence, but his intention to leave was clear. "I'm exhausted after a long day. Wouldn't it be better to spend time with my wife and kids? Why waste my time wasting time chatting with these bureaucrats?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui's somewhat impatient expression, Director Dou quickly put down his coffee and said, "It's like this, Mr. Zhuang, although this salvage operation was entirely your personal undertaking, the ship you salvaged still belongs to the state..."

"Wait a minute, Director Dou, isn't that a bit of a stretch? It's true that this ship is from the Song Dynasty, but to say it belongs to the country is a bit of a stretch. This is the Strait of Malacca in the South China Sea, not our country's territorial waters!"

Upon hearing Director Dou's words, Zhuang Rui immediately flew into a rage. So, Director Dou was here to reap the benefits? He'd spent hundreds of millions to salvage the ship, and now he thought he could just take it away with a simple "it's from the country"? Did he think he was easy to bully?

"No...no, that's not what I meant, Mr. Zhuang, you've misunderstood, you've misunderstood..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Director Dou's pale face immediately turned red. He quickly stood up and explained, "This sunken ship certainly belongs to you, Mr. Zhuang. Our leader's idea is, could we classify this salvage operation as a joint effort between Mr. Zhuang and the state?"

After all that talk, Director Dou finally got to the point. China's first deep-sea shipwreck salvage, possibly even the world's deepest salvage, has an extraordinary and important role in boosting the political achievements of certain people.

The leader instructed Director Dou to negotiate with Zhuang Rui to see if the names of relevant national departments could be added to the salvage agreement.

Although Director Dou knew that Zhuang Rui had a powerful background, seeing that Zhuang Rui was young, he took it upon himself to speak in an official tone and see if he could gain more benefits.

What embarrassed Director Dou was that Zhuang Rui didn't buy it at all and directly shut him down, which made Director Dou, who was used to playing it safe and leaving himself an out in everything, very uncomfortable.

"State action?"

Zhuang Rui smiled and said, "The ship is registered in Panama, and the salvage site is in international waters near the Strait of Malacca. The salvage cost of up to 300 million US dollars was paid by me personally. Director Dou, is it not appropriate to characterize it as a state action with just one sentence?"

Zhuang Rui now fully understands that this person wasn't after the artifacts that were recovered from the water, but rather after the impact of this salvage operation.